

Organisational and pedagogical conditions of differentiated teaching of English to students

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between the differentiation of teaching and pedagogical and technological decisions of university students. The differentiated teaching self-efficacy and pedagogical and technological competencies of students studying in foreign countries were studied. For this purpose, the pedagogical and technological relational learning of students studying English at the university was studied. This research was carried out with qualitative research design. A case study was conducted using the qualitative research method. This method was chosen to reveal the current situation. 82 university students were voluntarily selected as the study group. In this study, which was conducted in Kazakhstan in 2021–2022, the opinions of foreign students studying at the university with voice recorders were taken. In the study, three open-ended questions prepared by the researcher were asked. The data is thematised using the content analysis method and explained in detail. As a result of the research, it was concluded that differentiated teaching methods increase pedagogical competencies and that education with technological support is very important. Once again, it is seen that the problems experienced in teaching English are caused by teaching. It can be said that university students do not have enough knowledge about language teaching.

Keywords: English, differentiated instruction, proficiency, university, technology;

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1. Introduction

Language and culture are interconnected. Demirel (2015) states that language is formed by the functional integrity of the four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In this respect, learning a language means being able to listen, speak, read and write in that language (native or foreign). In modern foreign language teaching, it is becoming more and more important to understand that these skills should be processed and understood as a whole, and one should not be preferred over the other. Especially today, the media and means of transportation, which are developing at a dizzying speed, affect the relationships between people at both individual and social levels, causing such an understanding to emerge in foreign language teaching. While teaching a foreign language, students are taught listening, speaking, reading and writing in order to gain communicative competence. A person who learns a foreign language first hears the language, then speaks and then learns to read and write (Demirel, 2015; Göçer, 2010; Scott et al., 2012).

Scott et al. (2012) aimed to reach certain standards only in general language communication skills of a qualified English teacher. Researcher underlined the need for continuous improvement in language teaching and the use of appropriate teaching methods and techniques for the target audience. They stated that for this, the language of communication in the classroom should be the target and the teacher should be able to provide this (Aydoğan & Çilsal, 2007; Scott et al., 2012). When we look at recent studies, policymakers, and researchers, teachers and teaching, it is important to consider the diversity of students in their classes; they need to adapt to the needs of different learning increased the amount of research (Schleicher, 2016; UNESCO, 2017). Differentiation is a philosophy of learning based on deep respect for students, acceptance of their differences and the desire to help all students succeed. Such insights, teachers, curricula, teaching methods, resources, learning activities or the requirements that better meet the learning needs of students allows one to actively change (Tomlinson et al., 2003). In teaching a foreign language, it is necessary not only to give information but also to use various tools when transferring this information to the student. In this context, visual, auditory and both (visual and auditory) means are used. Determining what should be taught has a positive effect on learning. Language and culture are interconnected. The concept of language and culture has an important place in foreign language teaching. Within the framework of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the goal of learning a foreign language is the correct use of the language, both linguistically and socially (Goullier, 2007; Uzunboylu, 2019).

An important place is occupied by the pedagogical competence of teachers and their ability to use modern teaching technologies. The influence of teacher competencies on the implementation of differentiated learning is very important (Kara, 2020, 2021; Tao & Gao, 2022; Toleubekova & Sarzhanova, 2018). Academically, this is expressed as the 'teaching of professional knowledge'. The education that teacher candidates receive is the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required by the teaching profession (Çapri & Çelikkaleli, 2008; UNESCO, 2017).

Some improvements in education have led to the need for differentiated learning. First, the lessons become heterogeneous due to the fact that modern students are considering integration, i.e., inclusive teaching of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and different skill areas required by education and the foreign language area to be defined (Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019). The reason for this situation is that the stratification of students in early childhood may adversely affect the educational opportunities of students with different characteristics. It is recommended as the best choice for an equitable education system that meets the learning needs of students through adaptive learning in heterogeneous classrooms (Schofield, 2010). In addition, there are significant

differences in many factors among students in relatively homogeneous classes (Wilkinson & Penney, 2014). Second, it is a scientifically accepted fact that students have different learning styles and needs, and a single universal approach is not enough (Subban, 2006). Policymakers and education administrators emphasise that all students should be supported to develop their knowledge and skills (Rock et al., 2008). Entry qualifications for teacher education programmes vary from country to country. Participation in the programme depends on the level of school, such as elementary or high school, at which candidates plan to teach.

When considering various studies, it has been shown that environments that take into account individual student differences are the classrooms where differentiated learning is most applied (Demir, 2013). Gregory and Chapman (2002) define differentiated learning as a philosophy that expresses it by dividing it into groups. Teachers plan according to their students' individual differences, not with a tool. In classrooms where differentiated teaching is applied, teachers differentiate teaching according to the characteristics of their students and create a curriculum for their students. The main goal here is to regulate students' learning styles and learning-teaching processes in accordance with these styles. In this way, students carry out activities suitable for different levels of preparation, learning styles and interests. Students compete with themselves, not with each other (Tomlinson, 2014). In these classes, teachers increased their students' academic achievement and took responsibility for their learning (Driskill, 2010).

Bisson et al. (2013) state that the knowledge base of foreign language teachers consists of four types. These types are divided into groups: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical education knowledge, auxiliary knowledge and disciplinary knowledge. According to Peyton, there are qualities that a good foreign language teacher should have. He divided these qualities into seven groups with a high level of proficiency in all specific forms of the target language. In other words, speaking, listening, reading and writing skills should be sufficient. He needs to use the language in real life for both social and professional purposes. It is necessary to have the ability to understand a foreign language both orally and in writing. Likewise, foreign language teachers should also be well trained in the arts and sciences. They must have good knowledge of the social, political, historical and economic spheres of the regions where the language they teach is spoken. It is necessary to have pedagogical knowledge and skills, including human growth and development, the theory of learning and the theory of foreign language acquisition, and to have a set of strategies to improve cultural understanding and experience in all students. Finally, teachers should have knowledge of technology and be able to use it in language teaching.

Foreign language teachers play an important role in achieving the goals of the European Union. Here are some of the basic qualities of the European language teacher education: academic work, teaching and practice teaching skills through on-the-job training curriculum, integrating the continuous development of intercultural experiences, working with a mentor in understanding the value of education and the environment, the availability of a foreign language in countries where the working-class knowledge of teaching practice, language training, communication technologies, education, teaching methods, learning strategies, language development training independent education for the use of the European language portfolio, peer observation training and control and self-assessment (Uzunboylu, 2019).

The key to successful language teaching for teachers is to be able to integrate effectively before they start: technology and subject areas with pedagogy. Students can understand and master effective teaching methods and instructional technologies so that teachers can use differentiated learning processes and transform meaningful information into content (Mishra & Koehler, 2006;

Thekes, 2021). Teachers and new teachers, who are indispensable for a foreign language, should have the knowledge, skills and competencies to use them effectively; take into account differentiated learning and technologies and appropriate pedagogical approaches in their lessons; and be careful when using them (Paudel, 2021). When we look at the research on the effect of differentiation, we can analyse the differentiated learning, technology and pedagogy of foreign language students (Kaplan, 2016; Karip, 2016).

1.1. Purpose of the research

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between the teaching differentiation and pedagogical and technological competencies of foreign students studying at the university in English education. It has been examined whether the differing instructional self-efficacy, pedagogical and technological competencies of students studying in foreign countries are effective in English language learning. For this purpose, the pedagogical and technological relational learning of the students studying English at the university was examined. Within the scope of this general purpose, answers were sought for the following sub-objectives:

1. What are your views on differentiated teaching and your pedagogical competencies?
2. What are your views on your differentiated teaching and technology competencies?
3. Do you have any difficulties in learning English?

2. Method

The aim of this research is to examine the relationship between the teaching differentiation and pedagogical and technological competencies of foreign students studying for English education at the university. Within the scope of this purpose, the pedagogical and technological relational learning of the students studying English at the university was examined. This research was conducted using a qualitative research design. Thanks to the qualitative research design, we are aware but situations in which we do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding focuses. The phenomenological approach is based on individual experiences. In this approach, the researcher is interested in the participant's personal (subjective) experiences, examines the individual's perceptions and the meanings they attribute to events (Göçer, 2013; Tekindal & Uguz, 2020).

2.1. Study group of the research

In order to achieve the aim of the research, the study was conducted with the students studying at the university, with the permission of the ethics committee. 82 university students were selected as the study group on a voluntary basis. In this study conducted in Kazakhstan in 2021–2022, the opinions of foreign students studying at the university were taken with voice recording devices. In the study, three open-ended questions prepared by the researcher were asked. The data were thematised and explained in detail with the content analysis method.

Table 1. Demographic information

Variable	Group	F
Gender	Female	44
	Male	38
Age	17–20	35
	21–23	25
	24–26	22

2.2. Collection of research data and analysis of data

In this study, students studying at Kazakh University received education by studying English as a foreign language (EFL). 82 university students were voluntarily included in the study. The approval of the ethics committee of the university where this study was planned to be conducted was obtained. The study data were prepared by the researchers and the final form was given by taking experts' opinions in four fields. Qualitative research planning was used for the research data and the researchers prepared semi-structured interview questions. In order to measure the clarity of the questions, a pilot study was conducted with 10 students before the questionnaire was applied. After the trial study and experts' opinions, the questions were completed and three questions were included as research questions. The answers given at the end of the interview were approved by the students participating in the survey. The research findings are described in detail using the content analysis method.

3. Findings

3.1. Findings on differentiated instruction and pedagogical competencies

Table 2. Differentiated teaching and pedagogical competence

Theme	f
Increases interest in the lesson	28
Effective in learning subjects	28
Provides animation method teaching	26
Effective in reinforcement	15

When the findings of foreign students studying at the university regarding differentiated teaching techniques and pedagogical proficiency in their English education are examined, it has been found that it increases the interest in the lesson, it is an effective technique in learning the subjects, it provides learning with animation and it reinforces a learned subject.

Opinions of some of the university students are as follows:

'Language teaching is very difficult. Especially with the differentiated teaching methods applied in English teaching, pedagogical knowledge is increased. It increases the interest in the lesson. Learning is provided with the application'.

‘Definitely, differentiated learning techniques should be used in the teaching of each lesson. If language learning is not reinforced and practiced, it is very difficult. Our animation in lessons is very effective and learning is provided because we make real-life examples’.

3.2. Findings on differentiated instruction and technology competencies

Table 3. Differentiated instruction and technology competencies

Theme	<i>f</i>
Increases learning	28
Increases problem-solving skills	27
A lot of application opportunities	22
Learning anywhere	20

In the findings of university students' proficiency with technology in English language teaching, they stated that learning with technology increases learning and improves problem-solving skills in learners. Again, students stated that they should have sufficient knowledge in technology-assisted education as the opportunities for application with technology increase. There are students who say that learning can be achieved anywhere with technology.

Opinions of some of the university students are as follows:

‘Technology is used in every field. Knowing technology-supported education in language teaching will increase the success of students’.

‘Internet, mobile phones, projectors, mobile applications are the tools we use frequently. The inclusion of technology in education enables learning and education can be continued regardless of time and place. It is very important to know how to use technology in education, especially in language teaching’.

3.3. Findings regarding the difficulties you experience in learning English

Table 4. Problems in learning English

Theme	<i>f</i>
Not enough practice	32
Little interaction	31
Using different languages	12
Teacher's failure to teach effectively	10

From their opinions on the difficulties experienced in teaching English to university students, most of the students stated that they had difficulty in learning due to the lack of sufficient practice. Again, students stated that learning became difficult due to the lack of interaction. They stated that in-school and out-of-school practices would be better in group form. Students from different languages provide spoken communication in their own language. They stated that the students studying in the English department continued to communicate in their own language, making teaching more difficult.

Opinions of some of the students are as follows:

‘Language learning is a practice-based teaching. We came from different countries, we have our own languages. But instead of using our own language, it is necessary to try to communicate in English, I think our teachers should encourage us in this direction’.

‘I think teachers do not provide adequate training in some courses during teaching. The number of technology-supported trainings is quite low. It is a problem that teachers themselves do not teach effectively when they should be teaching us how to teach English’.

4. Conclusion, discussion and suggestions

In this study, the opinions of students studying EFL and studying at the university in Kazakhstan on the effect between differentiated teaching and learning were determined. In the teaching process, it can be said that differentiated teaching techniques, especially in language teaching, are directly proportional to their pedagogical competencies and technology competencies.

In the results of the findings of the foreign students studying at the university regarding the differentiated teaching techniques and pedagogical competencies in their English education, pedagogical competence and differentiated teaching are correct. It can be said that learning will be effective if both are fully provided. It has been determined that it increases the interest in the lesson, is an effective technique in learning the subjects and provides learning. It reinforces a learned subject with animation. The languages that the dialogues use in communication among themselves provide more learning in a different foreign language education. The results obtained from this finding are supported by other studies. In a study, it was concluded that learning environments should be developed to make it easier for students to support optimal learning outcomes. It aims to design mobile learning multimedia development production related to mastery of English as a communication tool at the secondary level. It has been concluded that the pedagogical competence prepared in language teaching is very important (Harangus, 2021; Sukirman & Setiawan, 2022). It explores its role in developing and improving language skills by reading, writing, speaking and listening. A student-centred approach will be adopted to make learning effective. Pedagogical knowledge is very important in language teaching (Hamane & Guetatlia, 2022). Vocabulary formation processes in language teaching include combining as one of the basic processes. Combining new words in English has been recognised since the language of the Anglo-Saxons began to develop. To create and convey new meanings, combining seems fruitful as two or more words come together and function as a single word. Learning how the language can be learned effectively in pedagogical areas contributes to the full realisation of learning (Béřešová, 2022).

When the results obtained from the opinions of university students on technology-related competencies in English teaching are examined, it can be said that learning with technology is more effective. It can be said that the knowledge and competencies in the field of technology are effective because they will provide technology-supported education in teaching. They stated that they developed problem-solving skills in learners. Again, students stated that they should have sufficient knowledge about technology-assisted education as the opportunities for application with technology increase. There are students who believe that learning can happen everywhere with technology. According to this result, it can be said that technology has an important effect in differentiated teaching, especially in language education. One study aimed to improve the assessment quality of future online EFL writing tests through Blackboard, a learning management system. It has been

concluded that technology competencies are directly proportional to foreign language teaching. The use of technology is very important in education (Gipal et al., 2022; Nazim & Alzubi, 2022; Urh et al., 2022).

In the results obtained from the opinions of university students regarding the difficulties experienced in teaching English, it can be concluded that more pedagogical information should be given during teaching. Likewise, it can be concluded that the teachers' failure to provide sufficient teaching in the field of technology during education makes learning difficult. It can be ensured that the diversity of the education given at the university in foreign language teaching can be increased. Trainings can be designed according to the needs.

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